AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for producing an ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin, which comprises:

(a) introducing into an apparatus an ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer solution that contains at least 50 parts by weight of an alcohol having a boiling point of not higher than 100°C, relative to 100 parts by weight of the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer[[,]]; ~~and~~

(b) contacting the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer solution with water in the apparatus, thereby letting alcohol along with water out of the apparatus, and obtaining an aqueous ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer composition that contains from 0 to 10 parts by weight of the alcohol and from 10 to 1000 parts by weight of water, relative to 100 parts by weight of the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer;

(c) transferring the ~~resulting~~ aqueous ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer composition ~~that contains from 0 to 10 parts by weight of the alcohol and from 10 to 1000 parts by weight of water, relative to 100 parts by weight of the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer,~~ out of the apparatus; ~~(step 1), and~~

(d) feeding the aqueous ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer composition into an extruder[[,]];

(e) kneading ~~it~~ the aqueous ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer composition in melt ~~therein~~ in said extruder;[[,]] and

(f) then extruding the copolymer out of the extruder ~~(step 2)~~ to obtain an extruded ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ an ethylene content of the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer is between 3 and 70 mol% and ~~the~~ a degree of saponification of the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer is at least 80 mol%.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the alcohol is methanol.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~in the step 1,~~ the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer solution is contacted with water vapor in the ~~vessel~~ apparatus.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, wherein the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer solution is continuously introduced into a column vessel and contacted with water vapor in the ~~vessel~~ apparatus.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5, wherein the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer solution is introduced into the ~~vessel~~ apparatus through its upper part and water vapor is introduced into the ~~vessel~~ apparatus through its lower part thereby causing the ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer solution to contact the water vapor in countercurrent flow, and the resulting aqueous ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer composition is transferred out of the ~~vessel~~ apparatus through its lower part with alcohol being let out along with water vapor through its upper part.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~in the step 2, the~~ a temperature of the resin melt in the extruder is between 70 and 170°C.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~in the step 2, the~~ a water content of the extruded ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin melt is between 5 and 40 % by weight.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, ~~wherein in the step 2, water is fed~~ further comprising feeding water into the extruder or removing excess water ~~is removed~~ from the extruder to control the water content of the resin in the extruder.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein ~~in the step 2,~~ the aqueous ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer composition is kneaded in melt in the extruder with at least one additive selected from the group consisting of carboxylic acids, boron compounds, phosphoric acid compounds, alkali metal salts, ~~and~~ alkaline earth metal salts and mixtures thereof.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 10, wherein the additive is introduced into the extruder as an aqueous solution.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, ~~wherein in the step 2,~~ further comprising:

introducing a wash ~~is introduced~~ into the extruder and ~~is discharged~~ discharging said wash from the extruder through at least one site downstream from the wash inlet site to remove ~~the~~ a saponification catalyst residue from the resin melt.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, ~~wherein~~ further comprising

cutting the aqueous ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer composition ~~of step 1 is cut~~ into pellets prior to being fed into the extruder.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, ~~wherein~~ further comprising dipping the pellets ~~are dipped~~ in a wash to remove ~~the~~ a saponification catalyst residue prior to being fed into the extruder.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the pellets are continuously washed in a column vessel.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein the pellets are dipped in an aqueous solution containing at least one additive selected from the group consisting of carboxylic acids, boron compounds, phosphoric acid compounds, alkali metal salts, ~~and~~ alkaline earth metal salts and mixtures thereof prior to being fed into the extruder.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the aqueous ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer composition ~~of step 1~~ is fed, uncut, into the extruder.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 17, wherein the aqueous ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer composition is fed, uncut, into the extruder and a wash is fed into the extruder and discharged from ~~it~~ the extruder through at least one site downstream from the wash inlet site to remove ~~the~~ a saponification catalyst residue from the resin melt.

19. (Currently Amended) A method for producing ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin pellets, which comprises:

cutting the extruded ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymer resin ~~extruded in step 2~~ obtained by ~~in~~ the method of claim 1.

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 19, ~~wherein~~ further comprising:

drying and cutting the pellets ~~are dried and cut~~ to have a water content of at most 1 % by weight.

BASIS FOR THE AMENDMENT

Claims 1-2, 5-14 and 16-20 have been amended to better conform to accepted U.S. claim format, as supported by the Claims as originally filed.

Claim 4 has been amended as supported at page 9, second paragraph of the specification.

No new matter is believed to have been added by entry of this amendment. Entry and favorable reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Upon entry of this amendment Claims 1-20 will now be active in this application.